

Temporary Assistance For Needy Families: The Top 10 ‘Real Facts’ About Fraud and Abuse

10

People who get TANF get the benefit forever.

Real Facts: Since the program began in 1997, **63,000** Maine families have left the TANF program. 71 percent of recipients receive benefits for 1 year or less; 85 percent receive benefits for 2 years or less. Two-thirds of recipients are children.

9

Mom’s boyfriend lives in the home and her kids are still receiving benefits. This is fraud.

Real Facts: Only the biological or adoptive parents are legally responsible for the children’s support, per Federal law.

8

The father visits all the time, yet they still get benefits.

Real Facts: A non-custodial parent has the right to visit TANF children in accordance with court visitation orders. If a parent has moved back in, or is in the home nearly all the time, the family may no longer be eligible.

7

There’s a lot of fraud in Maine’s welfare programs.

Real Facts: Maine’s documented rate of fraud in the TANF Program is 2/10ths of 1 percent. The average rate of fraud nationwide is 4 percent.

6

People are moving to Maine because of it rich benefits.

Real Facts: Maine has the lowest TANF benefit in New England. Over the last 5 years, more than 5 times as many people on welfare left Maine than moved in.

5

Mom and dad are divorced, but live together and get benefits.

Real Facts: This is **not** allowable. We encourage this to be reported to the Office of Integrated Access and Support at the number below.

4

There are a lot of ‘deadbeat dads’ who should be paying for their children instead of the State.

Real Facts: Maine has an extensive and successful child support collection program. Recovered funds help offset the state’s TANF cost.

3

There are no time limits for eligibility.

Real Facts: Eligibility is reviewed monthly and there are time limits. A person must comply with their plan to move to self-sufficiency to receive benefits.

2

TANF benefits are so high, they discourage people from working.

Real Facts: The maximum benefit for a family of three is \$485 per month, 66% *below* the federal poverty level. Even when food stamps are added, TANF families are 35% *below* the federal poverty level.

1

Why don’t people just get a real job?

Real Facts: Maine has the highest rate of working TANF recipients in New England and is fifth in the nation in retaining TANF jobs.

We are committed to running successful, publicly accountable programs that serve people in need effectively. If you have concerns about how our programs are delivering services, please call 1-800-424-9121.



John E. Baldacci, Governor

Department of Health
and Human Services

Maine People Living
Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives

Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner